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Recreation Commission Minutes 2-8-2011

Park and Recreation Commission

Minutes

Tuesday, February 8, 2011

Approved

The Park and Recreation Commission came to order at 7 PM on the first floor of the Arlington Senior Center on Tuesday, February 8, 2011.

Members in attendance included: Leslie Mayer, Don Vitters, Jen Rothenberg and Jim Robillard. Also in attendance was Director of Recreation Joseph Connelly.

Members of the public included: Adam Glick, Robin Varghese, Joe Hart, Dave Gordon, Otniel Ochiento, and Mary Mitri

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Rothenberg motioned to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2011 meeting. Motion was seconded by Mr. Robillard and approved 4-0.

Open Forum – Public Comments

No comments from the public.

2011 Spring Field Permit Review

Mr. Connelly reviewed the 2011 draft field schedule. Mr. Connelly explained that he asked three organizations to discuss 2011 field issue with the Commission.

Mr. Connelly introduced Mr. Joe Hart of Trojan Baseball which used Summer Street field for the first time last year. Mr. Connelly stated that there were no scheduling issues. Mr. Robillard agreed that the schedule worked out. Mr. Hart stated that the schedule would be the same this year with approximately 16 home games and use on Friday evenings and Sundays.

Mr. Connelly explained that the only concern was with the temporary fencing that was put up last year without the Commission's permission. The Commission and Mr. Hart discussed the temporary fencing. Mr. Hart explained that the request was coming from their league for statistical purposes but he also saw some safety concerns with regard to the light posts. The Commission raised several concerns about fencing at this field and made recommendations to deal with the safety concerns raised. Mr. Hart was asked to look into the options and come back to the Commission for discussion before the season begins.

Mr. Robillard motioned to approve the scheduling portion of the request for another year, seconded by Ms. Rothenberg and approved 4-0.

Mr. Connelly introduced Mr. Dave Gordon of Arlington Boys Lacrosse. Mr. Gordon reviewed his organization's growth and stated boys lacrosse had seven teams this year. The Commission discussed the permitting process and how growth of one organization affects the other organizations. Mr. Gordon requested the use of Magnolia Field twice per week to coincide with their

use of Thorndike. Mr. Connelly explained that he did discuss this with Arlington Soccer Club who currently has the permits for Magnolia, and they do need that time. Mr. Gordon and Mr. Connelly discussed the field use of Arlington Girls Lacrosse and their need for additional town fields also. Ms. Mayer expressed deep concern that girls lacrosse teams do not even have as much field time as the boys. The Commission asked that Mr. Connelly meet with all three organizations to try to work out an acceptable schedule for this spring, and to also commit to having a field user summit in the summer to review overall field permitting equity.

Mr. Connelly agreed that both of those were good ideas.

Mr. Connelly introduced Coach Ochiento and explained his concern over the organization's growth and use of the fields with teams of less than 60% Arlington residents.

Mr. Ochiento explained how his program worked and the current roster assignments of players verse practice players, which include additional Arlington residents. Ms. Mayer explained that, according to the Permitting Policy, practice players would only be included if they were on the team's official roster submitted to the parent organization. Based on the handouts provided to the Commission, Mr. Ochiento's teams are non-resident teams. The Commission explained that no one would dispute the good work of the organization, but especially in the spring, playing fields are at a premium and preference must be given to resident teams.

Mr. Vitters motioned to approve the use of fields by Mr. Ochiento's organization for this spring, seconded by Ms. Rothenberg and approved 4-0. Mr. Connelly explained that this will be reconsidered as part of the overall field permitting discussions this summer. The Commission noted that periodic evaluation of the permitting process and use of fields to ensure equitable and reasonable use is a good idea.

Warrant Articles Spring 2011 Town Meeting

Mr. Connelly reviewed articles concerning:

- Zoning Bylaw amendment outdoor advertising at Peirce Field
- Bylaw amendment - portable storage containers
- Bylaw amendment - increase fines for unleashed dogs
- Bylaw amendment - use of Minuteman Bikeway

The Commission discussed their involvement with the bylaws. The Commission did discuss the possible benefit of increasing the fine for unleashed dogs so that the first offense is a ticket and not a warning.

The Commission asked Mr. Connelly to check with Town Counsel and see if the portable storage container by-law amendment would have any impact on any of the field storage units or the Commission's policy.

Off leash Implementation (Article 36) Monthly Review

Mr. Connelly reviewed the correspondence with the Commission from the following individuals:

- Bruce Whetle – Robbins Farm Park
- Ellen Reed – Menotomy Rocks Park
- Mustafa Varoglu – Menotomy Rocks Park

The Commission discussed these issues with those in attendance. Ms. Mayer stated her belief that the trash bags left in front of the homes of some Robbins abutters/neighbors was likely an act of community service that was not well executed. The Commission asked Mr. Connelly to set up a meeting with the Animal Control Officer to look at ways to increase the enforcement prior to the spring at locations with multiple complaints. The Commission expressed its support for aggressive ticketing, especially of violators at Robbins and Menotomy who have been previously warned.

Stanton Foundation and Thorndike Field OLRA Update

Mr. Connelly stated that the MOU were just about ready to be signed and that the RFP for design services had been sent out and was due on 2/25/2011.

Capital Improvement Project Update

Robbins Farm Slide – Mr. Connelly indicated that Leonard Design was working on gathering information for this project.

Wellington Tennis Courts – The Commission decided to have the public hearing on March 2nd.

Thompson School Basketball Court – The Commission asked Mr. Connelly to check with Mr. Sullivan to see what he thought a timeline would be for school renovation.

Rink and Recreation Update

Mr. Connelly stated that registration continues to be strong in the recreation programs and that the spring/summer brochure was in the design phase.

Mr. Connelly reviewed some of the recent mechanical and physical issues the rink is dealing with and explained that due to the unexpected and immediate nature of these repairs the rink may end up having to use some existing reserves to pay for them. The Commission expressed its support for Mr. Connelly's planned use of reserves for the work described.

Special Requests

Mr. Connelly reviewed the request to use Buzzell field by the Ultimate Boot Camp organization. Mr. Connelly explained that the request was to use the basketball courts only – though the request appeared to have some conflicting information relative to possible use of field space. The Commission had concerns over permitting prior to April 1st and the use of the fields and courts. The Commission is especially concerned about insuring against premature use of fields since it is likely that the high volume of snow and melting will make fields particularly fragile this spring. Mr. Connelly will discuss these concerns with the organization.

Other Business

Ms. Rothenberg motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Vitters and approved 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Joseph Connelly, Director of Recreation